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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, Nov. 26, 1942
(Thanksgiving Day)

Subject: "A TIME TO GIVE THANKS..... AND LOOK AHEAD." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Because it's Thanksgiving Day, some things -- Secretary of Agriculture Wickard said a few weeks ago deserve repeating. The Secretary was speaking to a group of farmers in Mississippi, and the occasion was their Thanksgiving Harvest Observance.

"We have much to be thankful for in the year that is ending," the Secretary said. "This truly has been a wonderful year.... more food, greater yields of cotton.... more of nearly every other product than our farmland ever produced in the past.

"Our feelings today are much like those of the little group that marked our country's first Thanksgiving Day, 321 years ago. The Pilgrims were fighting to build a better world for themselves and their children, fighting to survive in an unfriendly wilderness, and they thanked God for the yield of a little more than 20 acres.

"Today we are offering our thanks for the yield of hundreds of millions of acres. We need it just as badly as the Pilgrims needed their first crop."

Turning now from Secretary Wickard's thought to plain facts and figures, perhaps you'd be interested in what was actually accomplished in 1942. Thankful as we are for the wonderful growing weather through the year, our good harvest was not all a matter of luck. As you may remember, last January the U. S. Department of Agriculture set what seemed like tremendously large production goals for food products. Farmers, farmers' wives and children and neighbors -- even people from nearby cities -- all helped to produce and harvest the record

crops of 1942. Together they not only reached the goals, but passed them in many parts of the country.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Department says that food production for 1942 is the largest on record so far. All the people who worked on farms raised 27 percent more food than the pre-war average for 1935-39, and 10 percent more than in 1941. The biggest increases were in truck crops, sugar crops, meat animals and poultry.

The economists say that this 1942 record food production was enough to take care of the large needs for the military and lend-lease, and to provide civilians with a larger than average supply per person. However, you may have noticed certain shortages where you live. Some were only local, some spread over the whole country. As the economists explain it, shortages are partly caused by lack of railroad cars and trucks for transportation, but the main reason for shortages in some foods is that many people have more money than they used to have. They are willing to buy more of certain foods than they can find on sale, and that leaves less than usual for the rest of the public.

Now, just as the 1942 food supply is the largest on record, the food supply for 1943 may be larger than in previous years. But a large part of it will again go to our Allies and our military forces. So there will be a somewhat smaller supply for each of us civilians than in 1941 or 1942. At that, the supply probably will be more than the average for that pre-war period-- 1935-39. There's nothing to worry about. If we can't get one kind of food, we can find plenty of something else to use instead.

Now as to the outlook for civilian food in 1943: There will be an ample supply of cereals, and you can depend on them to furnish some of the energy for those who are working extra long hours. (Bread made from flour counts as a cereal, of course.) You'll probably find larger supplies of poultry and eggs than in any recent year... considerably larger than the pre-war average. And

like the Thanksgiving turkey you've just enjoyed, poultry takes the place of other meat. Also, it isn't counted in that 2 and a half pounds of meat you may have in sharing meat fairly with others.

The prospect on meats for civilians in 1943 is more total meat than the pre-war average, but probably less beef and more pork than this year.

As you might expect, you won't be able to buy as much fresh fish as formerly because the war makes deep-sea fishing dangerous.

The forecasters see plenty of sweetpotatoes and dried beans. There'll be some reduction in table fats and shortening, but you yourself can offset this reduction to some extent if you make good use of all your kitchen fats and drippings.

As to fresh fruits and vegetables in 1943, what you can get will depend on how near you are to a market for winter-produced fruits and vegetables. Those products you produced yourself in your Victory garden, and canned, or dried, or put in frozen storage will play a big part in your family food picture. Incidentally, it's none too soon to begin to think about next summer's Victory garden, and look into seeds and fertilizer and other supplies for it.

This spring's home gardens, in their turn, will figure in the stock of home canned and stored foods for next fall and winter.

All in all, the economists, and also the nutritionists, say the food value of our civilian supplies for 1943 appears to be about as good as the average for 1935-36. Give the family cereals in abundance, use all the leafy green and yellow vegetables you can to safeguard vitamin A, serve poultry and eggs as often as possible in place of meat, and look to your own Victory gardens for fruits and **vegetables** to supplement those in the markets.

Surely this 1943 food outlook gives us much to be thankful for, as Secretary Wickard has said.

